

Manufacturing Career Pathway

MISSOURI ECONOMIC RESEARCH & INFORMATION CENTER
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
MARCH 2026

What are Career Pathways?

Career Pathways are groups of occupations within a career field. Occupations within a pathway share common skills, knowledge, and interests. The pathways use industry-recognized credentials and are examples of how different levels of training or education can help provide opportunities for career advancement.

Missouri Numbers:



11,234 Employers



311,166 Workers



\$77,747 Average Wage

Why Have a Career in Manufacturing?

Manufacturing creates the products people need and want. From clothing to computers, almost everything we touch throughout the day is manufactured. Manufacturing represents 12.5 percent of total private sector employment in Missouri, employing 311,166 workers across 11,234 establishments in 2024. Employment in Manufacturing has been steadily growing, increasing by 0.8 percent per year from 2019 to 2024.

Missouri has high employment concentrations in Manufacturing, particularly in *Leather & Allied Products*, as well as *Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing* and *Transportation Equipment Manufacturing*. Wages in Manufacturing averaged \$77,747 in 2024, higher than the \$64,752 state average for private industries.

Manufacturing encourages creativity and analytical thinking, with an opportunity for a meaningful and rewarding career with good pay and advancement in the areas of Production, Business Operations and Sales, and Engineering and Maintenance.

Know the Basics

The Manufacturing industry refers to material and product producers and the industries that support them. Durable, or soft, skills, such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, and dependability, are important in all industries and occupations, including Manufacturing occupations. Manufacturing jobs can revolve around shifts and production quotas, so dependability and flexibility are valued characteristics. Manufacturing employees need to have customer service skills, such as explaining the benefits of a product or service and accepting criticism as a professional company representative. Safety and quality control are also critical in this industry, so attention to details and continuous learning are necessary.

Skills needed for Success:

Manufacturing has industry-wide technical competencies that represent the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in this industry. Some of the skills needed for success in the Manufacturing industry include manufacturing process design, development, maintenance, repair, knowledge of and compliance with government regulations, as well as the ability to adapt and consider new ways of doing things.

Who's Hiring in Missouri?

Boeing

Johnson & Johnson

Ford

Honeywell International

Simmons Prepared Foods



Production

Business Operations & Sales

Engineering & Maintenance

Now

Short-Term On-the-Job Training

Helpers-Production Workers
Entry: \$35,910 Average: \$41,840

Customer Service Reps.
Entry: \$35,530 Average: \$45,000

Helpers-Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Workers
Entry: \$33,990 Average: \$41,690

Certificates: Forklift Operator Certification

Certificates: Business Operations Support and Assistance

Certificates: Industrial Maintenance; Certified Remodeler

Next

Certificate, Associate Degree, Apprenticeship, Moderate- to Long-Term On-the-Job Training

Machine Operators
Entry: \$25K-\$50K Average: \$30K-\$80K

Executive Administrative Assistants
Entry: \$45,760 Average: \$60,310

Industrial Machinery Mechanics
Entry: \$48,550 Average: \$60,570

First-Line Supervisors of Production Workers
Entry: \$54,210 Average: \$72,460

Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing
Entry: \$45,770 Average: \$74,740

Mechanical Drafter
Entry: \$56,160 Average: \$71,040

CNC Programmers
Entry: \$53,910 Average: \$75,340

Industrial Engineering Techs
Entry: \$58,740 Average: \$77,370

Certificates: Forklift Operator; Machine Operator; CNC Machinist Technology

Degrees: Business Administration & Management; Sales, Distribution, and Marketing Operations

Degrees: Engineering
Certificates: Industrial Maintenance; CAD Certificate

Later

Bachelor's Degree or Advanced Degree

Industrial Production Managers
Entry: \$82,340 Average: \$118,370

General Operations Managers
Entry: \$51,050 Average: \$101,060

Mechanical Engineers
Entry: \$77,040 Average: \$95,250

Sales Managers
Entry: \$71,230 Average: \$122,340

Electrical Engineers
Entry: \$88,210 Average: \$114,670

Buyers & Purchasing Agents
Entry: \$50,780 Average: \$71,360

Industrial Engineers
Entry: \$77,690 Average: \$99,020

Degrees: Engineering; Business Administration & Management

Degrees: Business Administration & Management; Marketing; Engineering; Logistics

Degrees: Engineering

Sources:

Lightcast™

Employment and Training Administration, Competency Model Clearinghouse

2024 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Top employers data is based on 2025 online job ads



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